

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0747

S E C R E T TRIPOLI 1452

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, LY

SUBJECT: C-130 AIRCRAFT FOR LIBYA

REF: STATE 226471

1. SITUATION: US/LIBYAN RELATIONS ARE AT AN ALL-TIME LOW. THEY COULD GET WORSE, RESULTING FOR INSTANCE IN NATIONALIZATION OF THE REMAINING 49 PER CENT OF AMERICAN OIL COMPANIES. IN ADDITION THE RCC HAS TOYED WITH IDEA OF BREAKING DPL RELATIONS WITH US, BUT APPARENTLY WANTS SOME FOLLOWERS IF IT TAKES THE LEAD. OUR ESTIMATE OF THE INTER-ARAB SITUATION IS THAT QADHAFI IS ISOLATED ON THIS ONE--INDEED GENERALLY. MOREOVER HE IS AS OPPOSED TO SOVIET INFLUENCE IN THE AREA AS TO OURS.

2. BASIC PROBLEM IN US/LIBYAN RELATIONS REMAINS THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL IN PALESTINE. ARAB NATIONALIST ZEALOTS LIKE QADHAFI CANNOT BE SATISFIED OR BOUGHT OFF ON THIS GUT ISSUE BY ANY REASONABLE OR LIKELY COMPROMISE. WITNESS HIS RECENT OPEN LETTER TO SADAT (FBIS M151931 AND 152040). BUT IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT THE ZEALOTS CAN BE INCREASINGLY ISOLATED AND EVENTUALLY RENDERED INEFFECTUAL. THE UPCOMING ARAB SUMMIT MAY OR MAY NOT BE SIGNIFICANT AS A RENEWAL OF THAT POLARIZATION OF MODERATES AND EXTREMISTS THAT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR A REALISTIC PEACE SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL. NO SETTLEMENT IS POSSIBLE IF QADHAFI
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IS ACCOMMODATED--ANY MORE THAN IF ALL ISRAELI LEADERS ARE SATISFIED.

3. OUR ALTERNATIVES ON THE C-130 EXPORT LICENSE

APPEAR TO BE APPROVAL, TRADE-OFF, REJECTION, OR NO DECISION. APPROVAL WOULD SIGNIFY THAT COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS, AND POSSIBLY SOME NOTION OF IMPROVING RELATIONS, HAD IN OUR MINDS OUTWEIGHED THOSE GENERAL FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS THAT WE HAVE ALWAYS SAID GOVERN OUR DECISIONS ON SUCH QUESTIONS. AN ATTEMPTED TRADE-OFF WOULD IMPLY A SIMILAR WEAKNESS, AND MOREOVER FAIL IN ALL PROBABILITY. REJECTION WOULD SUPPORT OUR CREDIBILITY AND OUR AIMS IN THE M.E. GENERALLY; IF THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY BILATERALLY IT WILL BE AN HONORABLE ONE, AND NO MORE THAN WE CAN EXPECT TO PAY SOMETIME ANYWAY. NO DECISION, OR A DELAY WITH NO PROSPECT OF A FAVORABLE DECISION, WOULD RAPIDLY BE PERCEIVED AS TANTAMOUNT TO REJECTION IN THIS CASE.

4. RECOMMEND CLEAR-CUT REJECTION. BELIEVE WE HAVE AN EXCELLENT CASE FOR DISAPPROVAL--THE STRAIGHTFORWARD ONE THAT WE MEANT WHAT WE SAID ALL ALONG. LARG CHOSE TO IGNORE THAT. LOCKHEED CHOSE TO GAMBLE AGAINST ALL ODDS, AND LOST. I SEE NO COMPELLING FOREIGN POLICY REASONS TO YIELD TO EITHER OF THEM AT THIS STAGE.
JOSIF

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